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# LETTER

From the

PRESBYTERY of ANTRIM,

To the

## CONGREGATIONS

Under their Care:

Occasion'd by the Uncharitable

# BREACH

of Synodical Communion, made by  
the General-Synod at *Dungannon*,

*June 25th, 1726.*

BELFAST:

Printed by JAMES BLOW, and are to  
be Sold at his Shop: MDCCXXVI.

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LETTER

Thomas

PRESTON



Under their Care

Occasionally the Unchangeable

BREACH

of a political Commission made by  
the General Court at Westminster  
June 2nd 1726.

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## L E T T E R

From the PRESBYTERY of ANTRIM to the  
CONGREGATIONS under their Care,  
&c.

*Dungannon, June 28th, 1726.*

Dear Brethren, Beloved in  
our Lord Jesus Christ,

**T**HE General-Synod which met here on *Tuesday* last, gave a Decision on *Saturday*, which not only affects you and us Directly and Immediately, but in its natural Consequences must very sensibly and deeply Wound the Cause of NONCONFORMITY, bring a Reproach upon the whole Body of Protestant-Dissenters, prove Detrimental to the Interests of serious practical Religion, and has a Tendency to mar the Success of the Gospel both in their own Congregations and in ours. To prevent our being impos'd upon by calumnious Reports and

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and Misrepresentations (Methods by which our Divisions have been chiefly Promoted, and by which Christian Charity has been almost Extinguish'd) we think it necessary, before we leave the Spot, and while Matters are fresh in our Memory, to give you the following brief Account of these unreasonable Transactions, of which we were eye and ear *Witnesses*.

THE last General-Synod, which met here in June 1725, having resolv'd themselves into two distinct Bodies of *Subscribers* and *Non-subscribers*, to consider of *Expedients for Peace*; our subscribing Brethren introduc'd into that Synod several *Overtures* under that plausible Title; some whereof were then pass'd into Acts; and Five of them Transmitted to the Presbyteries, to be ripen'd for the Judgment of this present Synod: All the Five had a Tendency to make an open Rupture. At the same time our Brethren desir'd us to propose *our Expedients for Peace*. The shortness of Time did not then permit us to finish a Draught of 'em; but after that Synod was over, and when we had got the Minutes, we took that Affair into our Consideration; and having finish'd a Draught of *Expedients for Peace*, we sent as many Copies as we cou'd get conveniently drawn to several Presbyteries; and brought to this Synod one Copy to be laid before them. as soon as the Reading of the Minutes of last Synod shou'd introduce it in its due Course, resolving to improve the Opportunities that might be offer'd in the Intervals between the several Sessions of the Synod, for brotherly and free Conferences with divers Members of the Synod for promoting Peace, and for preventing an open Rupture amongst us. But this charitable Intention of ours was frustrated by a motion, which was made and carried in



an *Interloquitur* on *Wednesday* Morning, before they went upon any business in the Synod. The Motion was to this purpose, That the Synod wou'd at their next *Sederunt* resolve themselves into two distinct Bodies, That the Subscribers might have an Opportunity of considering, by themselves, our *Expedients for Peace*. To this we objected, that we dislik'd the Synod's meeting in these separate Bodies, that we found from former Experience, that it tended to Division ; and that 'twas more convenient, that the *Non-subscribers* shou'd be present to hear and answer the Objections that might be made against their own Paper; that this was contrary to good Order, to bring in first, what was amongst the last things contain'd in the Minutes of the former Synod ; and we perceiv'd too great an *Eagerness* in our Brethren, to bring the Points in Controversy amongst us upon the Stage, which we fear'd might not come to a friendly Issue, however our *Expedients for Peace* had a quite contrary Tendency : None of these Arguments cou'd prevail either in the *Interloquitur* or Synod ; and therefore we were oblig'd to produce our *EXPEDIENTS* on *Wednesday* Evening in open Synod. And that the whole Synod and Audience might hear the contents of our Paper, which some of our Brethren shou'd such an extraordinary Desire to have under their Consideration, as to go out of the common Road to Introduce it, we Read it in open Synod ; and then gave it to the Clerk, and by order of the Synod 'twas to be deliver'd to the Subscribers next Morning ; and the Synod was Adjourn'd till *Friday* Morning. That you may be the better able to judge of what follow'd upon this, 'tis necessary that we give you a short Abridgment of our *Expedients for Peace*.

—OUR

OUR first Expedient, the Foundation of all the rest is, that seeing by the plain Gospel Rules, the differences in Judgment and Practice between *Subscribers* and *Non-subscribers* can't justify a Breach of Communion, our Reverend Brethren wou'd seriously Consider these Gospel-precepts, enjoining Mutual-forbearance in these Matters, both for the Satisfaction of their own Consciences, and of the Consciences of their Hearers. Under this Expedient we State our own Principles upon the controverted Points, and shew from many Texts of Scripture that 'tis unlawful to break Communion on the Account of any of 'em. Our Principles with relation to the Points Controverted amongst us, are contain'd in Six Propositions, which we think proper to Insert here, as they stand in our Paper, seeing the Synod have thought fit to found the Breach upon them.

**PROPOSITION I.** *Our Lord Jesus Christ the only Head, King and Lawgiver to his Church, hath by his invariable Laws Recorded in the New Testament, perfectly and sufficiently Determined all the Conditions and Terms which the Christian Church, or any part of it, or any private Member or Members, or any Officer or Officers in it, considered either in his or their Relation to particular Churches, or Congregations, or to the Catholick Church, or to Ecclesiastical Associations and Assemblies, ought to comply with in order to their being Qualified for, Received into, and Continued in External Religious Communion, whether Ministerial or Christian in the Visible-Church. All Christians who Comply with Christ's Terms, have a Right by the Gospel-Charter to be Received into Religious Communion in all Churches in which they are Called to it. And NO CHURCH or sett of uninspired Men, whether met in Synods, Councils*

or

any other Society, have any Power from Christ to add any other Terms of Religious Communion to those he hath Settled in the Gospel: And whenever they presume to do so, ALL their Decisions Laws and Canons, and all the penal Sanctions annexed to them, are null and void in themselves, not only for want of a competent Authority to Enact them, but for their Contrariety to some plain and important Laws of the Gospel, wherein the blessed Head of the Church hath Reserved to himself the peculiar Power and Prerogative of enacting and prescribing all necessary Conditions and Terms of our Religious Communion: And when Christians refuse Compliance with such Impositions, they are so far from being guilty of Despising lawful Authority, that their pious Zeal for the Scriptural Purity, and Catholick Simplicity of Religious Communion, ought to be Commended after the Example of St. Paul, who in such a Case wou'd not give place by Subjection, no not for an Hour, that the Truth of the Gospel might be continued, Gal.

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**PROPOSITION II.** Candidates for the Holy Ministry, may give clear and sufficient Evidence of their Soundness in the Faith without Subscribing or professing an Assent to any one imposed uninspired Form of Articles, or Confession of Faith; and they may as fully Satisfy their Ordainers concerning their fitness to Preach the Christian Faith, without Subscribing any such Confession, as they may prove their aptness to Preside in the publick Worship of God without Declaring their Assent to any prescribed human Liturgy, or form of Prayer.

**PROPOSITION III.** We are humbly of Opinion, That the great Head of the Church hath given no Power to the Church to make any Canon or Religious Law,



Law, by which an Infrant into the Ministry, who gives sufficient Proof of his Soundness in the Faith, and of his having all the other Ministerial Qualifications and Abilities required in the Gospel, shall be refused Licence to Preach the Gospel, Ordination, or Instalment merely because he refuseth to give his Assent or Subscription to the Westminster-Confession, as the sole and Exclusive Test and Standard of Orthodoxy, and Term of Ministerial-Communion. And seeing Christ himself hath neither made nor given any Power to others to make any such Law, it ought to be treated and considered by all Persons Affected by it as null and void in its self. And it is the Duty of Ministers to Licence, Ordain, and Instal upon a regular Application, all who are Qualified according to the Gospel, any pretended Law or Canon of any Church whatsoever to the contrary notwithstanding.

**PROPOSITION IV.** To impose a Declaration of Assent to the Westminster-Confession upon Parents, as the Condition of the Baptism of their Children, is to add a new Term of Communion which Christ never appointed, to encourage implicit Faith, and the taking of the Name of God in Vain by the greatest Number of Parents, whose Capacity, Education, and Opportunities can't be supposed sufficient to enable them to make such a Profession with Understanding and Judgment, is an arbitrary Refusal of a Seal of the Christian Covenant, and a gross abuse of the Pastoral Office; therefore we can't in Conscience joyn in any such Imposition, tho' we scruple not to give our publick Advice and Recommendation, to Parents at the Baptism of their Children, seriously to peruse the Westminster-Confession and Catechisms, as a good Summary of the main Heads of the Christian Doctrine; Comparing them with the Word of God, that their Faith stand not in the

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Wisdom of Men but in the Power of God; And that they wou'd use them as good Helps for their growth in Knowledge and for Instructing their Children.

**PROPOSITION V.** *The Requiring from the Members of our Judicatories, or from any other Christian in Communion with us, Declarations of Faith upon the Penalty of Non-communication, while the Person required to make such Declarations, stands in Judgment upon an Accusation, and can't be fairly Convicted upon Evidence; or, for the Removing of Jealousies, even tho' the Declaration shou'd be Required, from an Apprehension in the Judicatory requiring it, that it will Contribute to the Glory of God and the Edification of Souls, appears to us to be a new Term of Communion which Christ hath not Prescribed, and the setting up in the Church an exorbitant and arbitrary Power, contrary to the essential Rights of natural Equity, Everfive of Christian Discipline, a snare to Conscience, destructive of the Liberties of Christians, and the holding of an Inquisition, justly Complained of, and clearly Refuted from the Holy Scriptures by the most pious and learned Protestants of all Perswasions; and a tame Submission to such claims of Power, and a Compliance with its Demands; even tho' the Article to be Declared, shou'd appear True and Important to him upon whom the Declaration is imposed, appears to us to be a sinful Violation of some plain and important Laws of the Gospel.*

**PROPOSITION VI.** *Subscriptions and Declarations, which are call'd Voluntary, when the Subscribers and Declarers know, that the Non-subscribers and Non-declarers must incur a popular Odium, and are in Danger of being rendred Useless in the Work of the Ministry, with Respect to many at least,*

who they know will break Communion with them on that Score, seem to us not to be really Voluntary, but to carry with them all the Force and Sting of real Impositions, loaded with heavy and severe Penalties, and therefore we can't in Conscience Comply with them.

WE are ready to prove the Truth of all these Principles from the Word of God ; and we have evidently Proved, in our aforesaid Paper of *Expedients*, that the Gospel-Laws enjoining *Forbearance* are applicable to them all. In the same Paper we have answered all the Objections we could meet with against our being continued as Members of the Synod, and their subordinate Judicatories ; have prov'd that our Sentiments concerning **CHURCH-POWER** (which we particularly State) are founded on the Holy Scriptures, and that they are sufficient to guard against *Heresy and Impiety*, on the one hand ; and against *Church-Tyranny* and the destruction of Christian Liberty, on the other ; and that they are perfectly Consistent with all the Essential Principles of the Presbyterian Constitution. Our second Expedient is, for waving all Questions that beget *Strife and Contention*, according to many Directions in the Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, which we expressly Quote. Our third Expedient proposes mutual Care in both Parties, that none of us lay *Stumbling-Blocks* in one anothers way ; and under this Head, we mention some of the chief Instances of that Kind, which ought to be Prevented and Removed. Our fourth Expedient proposeth, that our Conduct towards one another should be full of *Charity, Humility* and *impartial Justice* ; where we insist upon the healing Nature of these Christian Vertues, and apply them to several things in the unhappy Situation of our present Divisions. Lastly, we propose fervent Prayer to the

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God of Peace, for the Peace of *Jerusalem*, and for the out-pouring of the Spirit of Loye and Meekness upon us all. In the same Paper we Refute, from Scripture, all the Overtures proposed last Year for a Breach.

FROM this short Abridgment of our Expedients for Peace, we might very safely appeal to all impartial Men, and particularly to yourselves, if it was either Just or Charitable to treat such a Paper with neglect. And you'll be surpris'd, as all considering Men here were, when we assure you, upon *no less* Evidence than the plain *Confession* of the Subscribers themselves in open Synod, that they *did not* so much as once read over our Expedients in their separate Body; tho' it was the profess'd Design of their meeting to Consider them. All they pretended to have Read in our Paper, was, an account of our Principles with Respect to the debated Points contained in the *Six Propositions* above Recited. But its Evident that our *Expedients for Peace* are of a quite different Nature from these *Propositions*; which were inserted in our Paper, meerly to shew how Applicable our Expedients are to such as maintain these Principles.

ON Friday Morning, the *subscribing Body* laid before the Synod, an Overture, which had been prepared by their Committee, to the following Purpose, viz. That they judg'd *some Principles contained in our Propositions to be Everfive of the pacifick Act, of some other important Resolutions of the Synod, and of the Principles of our Constitution founded on the Laws of the Gospel.* Whereupon they reject (what they are pleas'd thro' a very gross Mistake to call) our *new Terms of Peace contained in our Propositions, as inconsistent with the peace and unity of this Church, and therefore declare against holding Mini-*



*sterial Communion with us in Church Judicatories.*

HAVING obtained a Copy of this Overture, we prepared written Remarks upon it, of which we read 'em thorought aught on *Saturday* Morning, they being so *imp*ant of Delay, that they postponed the Business they themselves had appointed to be at that time Consider'd, and urged us to Read our Paper before a fair Copy cou'd be made out. We observed, in our Remarks, the bad Consequences, in three successive Synods, of their meeting in separate Bodies; the Absurdity of their making an *Overture* for a *RUPTURE* without so much as Reading over our Expedients for Peace, in which we had proved the Sinfulness of it; the Ambiguity of their *General Censure* of our Principles, without telling us *which of them* they meant; or, what were the principles of our Constitution which they supposed them to be Eversive of; that this Ambiguity was destructive of Edification and Peace, tending to Encourage Ignorance and Uncharitableness; calling upon them to Read over our Paper, and to answer our Arguments from Scripture, or to desist from their Motion for a Breach; alledging and proving that their Overture contain'd a plain Mistake; for in it they Assert, that *our terms of Peace are contained in our Propositions*, which is plainly to say, that *we refused to live in Peace with them, unless they wou'd declare themselves Non-subscribers*; whereas this is so far from being True, that the *very Words* of our Expedients for Peace assert the contrary. In these Expedients we prove our terms of Peace to be the Gospel terms of Peace, and therefore they can't be Inconsistent with the peace and unity of this Church, as the Committee alledge; concluding with a fair Warning of the dismal Consequences of such a Rupture, and of the great Guilt of all those who,

not



not satisfied with the Gospel Terms of Peace, shou'd approve of this Overture, and Rent our Synod, and the Ministers and Congregations belonging to it, into Pieces.

AFTER the reading of our written Remarks upon the Overture, the Matter was debated for some Hours in the Synod. It is not possible for us, in the bounds of this Letter, to give you the Particulars of the Debate. But in General we must assure you, that we do not Remember, that *one* Text of Scripture was ever so much as Named, during the whole Debate, to show that *any one* of our Principles was Erroneous, and far less for proving that they deserved that we shou'd be cast out of the Synod : No Answer was given to the plain Scriptural Arguments in our Paper against a Breach, tho' they were often called upon to do it. NO HERESY, NO IMMORALITY, NO CORRUPTION in the Worship of God, NO WRONG Principle in Discipline ; nay, NO PARTICULAR Instance of *any one* Principle in us against the Essentials of *Presbyterian* Government was so much as Alledged against us in the course of the Debate. On the contrary, we both alledged and proved, that *their Overture* was destructive of our Constitution.

AFTER the Debate had been continued for some Hours, some of the Subscribers Intimated, that they hoped it wou'd be agreeable to the Synod, and prevent Matters from coming to an Extremity, if we shou'd declare our Resolution to wave our Priviledge of sitting in the next General-Synod, and some added, that we shou'd likewise wave it in the remaining Part of this Synod. To which we answered, that tho' it was not Reasonable for us to bind ourselves, by an *absolute* Promise, that we wou'd

wou'd all stay away from next Synod, because the Affairs of our Congregations or some unforeseen Event of Providence might determine our Attendance, yet that, unless something of *that Nature* shou'd happen, we were at present Resolved to wave our Priviledge for next Year : And for the remaining part of this Synod, we wou'd wave our Priviledge, provided themselves thought the Affairs wherein we were particularly Concerned cou'd allow it. Upon which a Question was moved to be put, *Whether our Concessions were Satisfactory* in order to the dropping, at least for this Year, the farther Consideration of the Overture for a Breach ? But some whom nothing but a Rupture wou'd satisfy, refused to put *that* Question, and insisted upon putting the Question for approving of the divisive Overture; some calling for the *first* Question, and others for the *second*, a previous Question was put, *Which of the two shou'd be put ?* And it was Carried, that the *second* relating to the Overture, and not the *first* relating to the satisfactoriness of our Concessions shou'd be put. This Vote was Carried by a very *small Majority* of the whole Members; but there was a *Majority* of the *Ministers* for putting the *first* Question, being above Forty against Twenty Nine. The *second* Question being put, the Overture was Enacted ; and divers Members Protested against it, for Reasons which they afterwards gave in to the Clerk. Thus, by the absence of divers moderate Ministers, who had left the Town that Morning, the whole Affair took this uncomfortable Turn. And we took our leave of the Synod, Expressing our forgiveness of the Injury done us, our earnest Entreaty that they might stop in their Divisions when we are gone, and with an Appeal to the righteous Judge of all the

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THE principal Facts we have had occasion to Mention, are prov'd by the joynt Testimony of two Reverend and Learned Divines hereunto Annexed ; whose established Characters for Veracity, Understanding, and other valuable Ministerial Accomplishments must procure them intire Credit with all unbiass'd Judges. The one is a Minister in the City of *Dublin*, and the other in *Limerick*.

WE must indeed, in point of Justice to the Synod, as well as to ourselves, observe that they *have not* by this Act, nor by *any other* Synodical Act of theirs, broken Christian Communion with us ; nor have they broken *any* Branch of Ministerial Communion, except in their Church-Judicatories ; and that there is still Room left, even by *their own* Act, for their & our mutual Ministerial Communion in the Word and Sacraments and in all other Parts of publick Worship : Which are the *most noble* and *valuable* Branches of the Ministerial Office ; in the Exercise whereof (by the Blessing of God) the greatest and most excellent Ends of the Holy Ministry are usually obtain'd, according to the Institution of our Lord Jesus Christ. But we can't but think, that tho' the Rupture goes no farther, by their Act, than an Exclusion from their Synodical Association, it was Unjust, seeing *nothing* that was Scandalous either in our *Doctrine* or *Conversation*, or that disqualified us from joyning in their Councils, was so much as Attempted to be proved against us ; and because it may happen to Mislead weak Christians, and to induce them to think that the Synod have proceeded to Exclude us from *all manner* of Communion, which it's plain to considering Persons they *have not*.



It is our Resolution, for your Satisfaction, to Print our *Expedients for Peace*, with a Narrative of the whole Proceedings, as soon as possible. And we earnestly Desire, and think we have a Right to demand and expect it as a piece of Common Justice, that you may entertain no Sentiments, and believe no Reports prejudicial to our Characters and Usefulness, until you Read and seriously Consider that Narrative : Until that can be prepared and published, we Recommend to your serious Consideration an Abridgment we are now to lay before you, of the Reasons of the Protestation of divers worthy Members, against our Exclusion.

THEIR *first* Reason, is, because the Grounds for Excluding the *Non-subscribers* have not been duly Enquir'd into, fairly Stated, nor maturely Weighed by the Synod ; nor are they sufficient to Justify their Exclusion. For supporting this Reason, they observe that there was such Precipitancy in the manner of Proceeding, as the Subscribers did not so much as once Read over our *Expedients for Peace*, tho' that paper contains strong Arguments against, a Breach upon the Foot on which the Synod have plac'd it ; that it's a mistake of Fact, to assert (as the Overture does) that the Principles contain'd in our six Propositions are our Terms of Peace ; that this Mistake was detected in open Synod before the putting of the Question ; and that the Mistake was the occasion of some being Ensnared, and prevailed on to Vote for the Overture, believing that the Non-subscribers were for imposing their Principles upon the Synod ; and had that Mistake been Rectified, they would probably have Voted otherwise. They take notice of its being contrary to Justice, and unbecoming the Wisdom and Gravity of such an Assembly,



bly, for the Synod to Condemn Principles, without making particular Mention of them, tho' they were often call'd upon to do it; they farther Observe, that many who Voted for the Overture, did it from an Apprehension that the Non-subscribers might *some time hereafter* ordain or instal Ministers upon other Terms than what the Synod allows; and then they shew the weakness of such Arguing, from this Consideration, that such a Case may perhaps never happen; and therefore a Rupture should not be made, before it happen, and until all the Circumstances of the Case be Considered, and unless the necessity of breaking upon it be made Evident.

THEIR *second* Reason, is, because the Synod's Proceeding in this Case, is disagreeable to, and inconsistent with the known Rules of our Discipline and Constitution: For the Non-subscribers were excluded without a Libel, without any Charge of Error or of any irregular Practice, reduced to a Certainty; without any fair Enquiry into the Relevancy or Truth of any Accusation against them; without the least Attempt made to convince them of any Mistake; and their Exclusion is attended with this *dangerous Innovation*, which hath no Countenance from Scripture, nor from any just Precedent in this or any well constituted Presbyterian Church, that Ministers are excluded from some Branches of Ministerial Communion (*viz.* in Church Judicatories) when they are not, nor can justly be, excluded from other confessedly *more important* Branches of ministerial Communion: Such a Practice they look upon as *inconsistent* with the Ends of the Ministry, and of Ecclesiastical Associations, and *destructive* of the Rights and Liberties of Ministers, and Congregations, and e-

versive of our Constitution. Divers of the Non-subscribing Ministers were absent from this Synod; and yet they are excluded from our Synodical Association: Thus have our Synod condemn'd worthy Ministers of Christ, without using so much as the common Form of accusing, citing, trying, and hearing them in their own Defence.

THEIR *third* Reason, is taken from the *unkind* and *severe* manner of treating the Non-subscribers, and the keen Spirit that appeared in those by whose Interest and Influence the *Overture* was at last carried. Many moderate Subscribers were for a Delay of the Matter for a Year; this was violently opposed, and carried in the *Negative*; others urg'd that the Debate should be drop'd, without fixing a time for resuming it; but this the Party wou'd by no means hearken to; nay, tho the Motion that the Non-subscribers should wave their Priviledge of sitting in Synod, was first made by some who seem'd to be most intent on a Breach, and who declared their Readiness to wave the Overture, at least at this time, if the Non-subscribers wou'd come into that Proposal: Yet no sooner had the Non-subscribers made this Concession, than it was drop'd, even by *those who first* proposed it, and the accepting it vehemently opposed by others; and after all the Methods pursued with such Keeness and Severity, the Breach was voted, only by thirty five or thirty six Ministers, too small a Number to judge not only for themselves, but for all their absent Brethren, and in a matter so sensibly affecting all the Congregations of our Perswasion in the North of Ireland. This is the Substance of their Reasons.

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luminious Reports against your Ministers, taking things upon Trust, from a partial Regard to those who find their Account in calling in the Aid of *authoritative Decisions*, which they are dispos'd to execute by the mean Artifices of popular Detraction and Fury, against a Cause which they are not able to defeat by the fair Method of Argument from Scripture and Reason: If (we say) you should give way to such unchristian Methods for imposing upon you, no doubt, this Synodical Rupture may prove shocking to you. But we hope better things of you; and that you will judge of us according to the Directions of the Apostle, esteeming us for our *Work's sake*; and in so far as we shall be found to have shown ourselves *Patterns of good Works*, and discover'd in our *Doctrine, Uncorruptness, Gravity, Sincerity, Sound Speech that cannot be condemned*, your own Edification, as well as Justice to us, obliges you to strengthen our Hands in the Lord's Work.

IF you believe, what no Protestant denies, and what the *Westminster Confession* of Faith agreeably to the Holy Scripture expressly says, *that Synods and Councils are not the Rule of Faith and Practice*, you will examine the Decision of this Synod by the Word of God: And we undertake to prove, that it is a plain Violation of some important Laws of the Gospel. We are very hopeful, that our Blessed Lord and Master will discover to the Churches under our pastoral Care the Value and Excellency of that precious *Liberty wherewith he hath made them free*, and wherein he hath commanded them to *stand fast*; and that these ENCROACHMENTS made by the Synod, both upon your Christian Liberty and ours, will A L L A R M all who have any just Value for the Priviledges of



nion established by the Gospel-Charter, and that by the overruling Wisdom of Providence they will prove an Occasion of opening the Eyes of many. As we are Ministers of Christ, and watch for your Souls as those who must give an Account, we think ourselves obliged to believe nothing ourselves, and to deliver nothing to you, as a part of the Christian Religion, but what is taught in the Holy Scriptures, the perfect Rule of Faith and Christian Obedience. The **WHOLE** Discipline of the Church of Christ as well as it's Doctrine, and Worship is perfectly and fully described in the **BIBLE**. Whatever the Synod, or any others can prove from thence, we will cheerfully embrace, profess, and practice: And whatever hath no Foundation there, we reject it (if imposed on us) as an Affront to our Saviour's Authority and Wisdom, and an Injury to ourselves and our Fellow Christians, as well as to sincere Religion; which is *always* corrupted by any Addition of *new Terms* of Communion, however specious the Pretences for making of them may be.

*Dear Brethren,* we beseech you to be mindfull of the great things wherein the Kingdom of God consists, viz. *Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost, that by serving Christ in these things, you may be acceptable to God and approved of Men. Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.* And as our Synodical Assemblies have, for some Years past, been the Stages of Contention; we hope, you will think it the *less Disadvantage* that your Affairs are now out of their Hands; and being delivered from the unhappy Occasion of uncomfortable Disputes about Points of comparatively little Moment in themselves, however grievous the Imposition of them may be; we earnestly recommend it



to you, that you will turn your Thoughts to the much more important Concerns of serious practical Religion, from which you have been too much diverted. And we would particularly recommend to you, on this Occasion, a **MORE CLOSE** and **IMMEDIATE ADHERENCE** to Christ than ever; *calling no Man upon Earth Master*; and as God alone is the Lord of Conscience, and the Servants of Christ are discharged from being *Lords over God's Heritage*, and from having *Dominion over your Faith*, take Care that your Faith stand not in the Wisdom of Men, but in the Power of God. And as we have publickly asserted the sole Legislative Authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, and **SUFFERED** a *Synodical Exclusion*, for acting what appeared to us a necessary Duty in Pursuance of our maintaining it; so we hope, you shall never have Cause to charge us with claiming or exercising any Power over you, inconsistent with **THAT GREAT Principle**. It is our great Comfort, under all the bad Usage we have met with, that we have for our Rejoycing the Testimony of our Conscience; and that, in the Opinion of such Ministers of our Perswasion through the **WHOLE** Kingdom as are amongst the *most Eminent* for Piety, Learning, Charity, and extensive Usefulness in the Work of the Ministry, we deserved no such Treatment from the Synod. And if to these Comforts the Lord shall be pleased to add this one, that *our Labours may be successful* amongst you, for building you up in Faith and Holiness, for cherishing in you those Christian Virtues which are the *Fruits of the Spirit*, for checking Divisions and Animosities, and for your growing in Grace and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; our Souls shall be made to rejoyce in our Tribulations, with an happy

py Prospect of your being our Joy and Crown in the Day of the Lord. We conclude our Exhortation in the Words of the Apostle, (*Phil. 4. 8, 9.*) Finally, Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good Report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things----- do: and the God of peace shall be with you. This in the Name, and by Appointment of the Presbytery of *Antrim*, is subscribed by,

Dear Brethren,

Your Servants in the Work  
of the Gospel for Jesus sake

JOHN ABERNETHY,  
Moderator

MICHAEL BRUCE, Clerk

HAVING perused and considered the above Letter of the Presbytery of *Antrim* to their Congregations; and being desired by our Reverend Non-subscribing Brethren to Certify, as impartial Witnesses, the Truth of the Facts set forth in said Letter, so far as we know them; we do hereby Certify that we attended all the Sessions of the General Synod which met at *Dungannon* on Tuesday the 21st Instant, except their first on Tuesday Evening and their second on Wednesday Morning, until Saturday, inclusive, and that from our own Knowledge all the Facts contain'd in said Letter, which

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relate to what was transacted in the Synod from  
 their *third* Session on *Wednesday*, to their Session  
 on *Saturday* last *Inclusive*, are truly and faithfully  
 represented in said Letter. As Witness our Hands  
 June 29th, 1726.

R. CHOPPIN.  
 SAMUEL SMYTH

F I N I S.

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